

**KISS ME KATE**  
**By Lorraine Viade, PsyD**



*Kiss Me Kate* is being re-incarnated at the Pasadena Playhouse and anyone who enjoys good musical-comedy should check this version out. For anyone who is not familiar, the original work was written by William Shakespeare and called, *The Taming of the Shrew*. The play has been performed on stage, and a film version starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton brought more attention to the tale. In 1953, Hollywood went on to film a musical adaptation of the musical version with music and lyrics by Cole Porter, starring Howard Keel and Katherine Grayson, which is currently known as *Kiss Me Kate*.

Whether on stage, on film or in print, the story is timeless. What does it take to win the battle of the sexes? What is the battle really about and how does the eventual taming of ourselves lead to better relationships with others? In my time, I have seen the work onstage in *Shakespeare in the Park*, and I have seen the well-known film versions with Taylor-Burton and Keel- Grayson. Each one brought a different interpretation to the mix. The music added the ability to manipulate the audience with melodies and lyrics filled with the lightheartedness needed to bypass the less than modern views of male and female roles. And yet, when two people are in love with each other, there is equality. The showstopper number, *So in Love*, captures that sentiment beautifully. Love knows how to soften hearts and *Kiss Me Kate* succeeds in teaching this lesson. The supporting cast is excellent and the performances worthy of the Broadway stages.

The lead in the current Pasadena production features the multi-talented Wayne Brady. Brady has a wonderful knack for comic timing and has a beautiful singing voice. He is perfect in the role. Merle Dandridge is a spectacular Kate and the two bring a sensual chemistry that is a real treat to watch. If you remember that this was written ages ago, and that what was acceptable then (spanking) is different than what we would accept today, then you will immerse yourself in a time and place gone by and just enjoy a wonderful production.

*Kiss Me Kate* is at the Pasadena Playhouse until October 12<sup>th</sup>. Check it out. You will not be disappointed.

I give *Kiss me Kate* five theaters.

